

よくわかる現代魔法

new edition

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Yokuwaku Gendai Mahou - Volume 01

Chapter 01 (Incomplete)

Table of Contents

- 1. [Chapter 1: Code](#)

Chapter 1: Code

You too can become a wizard!

In this modern age of upheaval, it is said that those who ignore the westernization movement are not fit for the new century. From the steam engine, to electricity, to telecommunications, every day a new wave of westernization washes over us.

However, you need not despair. Now is a time when magic is useful.

In this school, we train real wizards.

This school draws from a sorcerial society which boasts 3000 years of history. Our textbooks use the binder system, and we present difficult concepts in a manner easy for anyone to understand. A tedious enrollment process is not necessary. Anyone can learn the mysteries of magic with ease.

Are you, for whatever reason, unhappy with your current self? Do you want more excitement in your life? No matter who you are, please feel free to pay us a visit at any time!

Chapter 1: Code[[edit](#)]

Code

- 1. Notation used to input data and instructions on a computer.
- 2. An open-ended symbol system to channel energies from a parallel universe.

It was written in a flamboyant manner, using old-fashioned decorative letters.

Amidst the bustle and chaos of Ginza shopping district's main street crowds, Koyomi Morishita stared fixedly at the scrap of paper.

She had found it less than a week before while organizing her closet. Who could have left it in such a place, this single sheet of new paper mixed in with papers that had taken on the colour of coffee? That is, this letter of invitation. In the upper right hand corner was a drawing of a witch riding a broom, and in the upper left hand corner was a monochrome photo of an old-fashioned western-style house.

It was written clearly, but Koyomi thought it suspicious.

For instance, that there was no phone number written on it, the bit about a 3000 year history, the textbooks using the binder system; all of these were unreasonable and suspicious.

On the other hand, maybe there's a chance it might be true. The address is written on the article; maybe there really is a school for training wizards. In this "modern age of upheaval", isn't anything possible, no matter how strange? For instance...

Discovering that magic is real.

Koyomi gazed up at Ginza 3rd district's narrow sky as she walked.

Bathed in the light of evening, an army of tall buildings towered over their surroundings. Sunlight reflecting off windowpanes dyed the surrounding pedestrians an orange color. With everyone hurrying about there business, here and there a sniffle from the cold, the atmosphere somehow clashed with the light sound of the jingle bells.

A stinging wind blew past the hem of her skirt.

Thump.

"Oops."

"Ow-"

"What's with you?"

"My nose, I, scraped it..."

"Something's wrong with your nose?" said the person standing over her, a strange boy who had been waiting for a traffic light.

"Huh? Ah, it's nothing! I'm sorry for running into you!" Koyomi quickly apologized and ran off, her skirt fluttering in the wind. Her short hair, just a little lighter than black, became disheveled as she sprinted away at top speed. After a while, when she was sure no one was chasing her, she came to a stop, gasping for breath. Beads of sweat were pouring down her neck.

Bumping into things; tripping over empty air; these were common occurrences for Koyomi. Up until she turned 15 that year, she was never without a band-aid.

In fact, the way she found this letter of invitation was by crashing into the pile of papers. How is it possible to run into something that doesn't move? However, her mother who was helping her clean didn't even twitch.

Each time Koyomi hit her head, she would think that she must have a shortage of those nerves that control motion.

Maybe, it was because she hit her head so often that she was short for her age? Also, that her chest was still flat, that she had a small nose, her unruly hair, her thick eyebrows, the fact that she was mistaken for an elementary school student when not wearing her uniform...

The high school uniform didn't really suit the girl reflected in the display windows.

Koyomi was 146cm tall. Her shoe size was 25 cm. Her "three sizes" were something she tried to avoid thinking about as much as possible. Not because she was fat; however, her short stature made it impossible for her to look slim. This, combined with the fact that she would be in her second year of senior high school next year and still looked like an elementary school student borrowing her older sister's uniform, caused her no end of frustration.

Koyomi frowned at her reflection in the glass.

A black cat sauntered out of the gap between two buildings.

Pulling herself together, Koyomi returned her attention to the letter of invitation, which still smelled slightly of dust. The rough map drawn on it sort of matched her surroundings and sort of didn't.

"This seems kind of strange," she commented out loud.

After wandering around for a while, Koyomi finally arrived at her destination.

*

It was a two-story western-style house nestled between huge buildings on either side. It looked as if it had stood there for over a hundred years.

A damp wind blew around the structure's perimeter. The house was separated from the road by an intimidating iron fence with a large, heavy-looking gate. Ivy covered the house's brick walls, and for completeness sake, a raven took to the skies with an erie cawing. On a rusty copper nameplate which had come slightly loose the name Anehara was written in an old calligraphic style.

It was not a very inviting atmosphere.

All together, the impression it gave was that of a haunted house that was to be torn down and replaced with a new building by a contractor that was under a mysterious curse and ended up neglecting to finish the job.

Swallowing nervously, Koyomi double-checked the letter of invitation.

However, no matter how many times she looked, the address refused to change. It seemed the house in front of her really was a school of wizardry.

She wasn't good with ghosts, slugs and other things with no feet.^[1] Dead fish, with their scary eyes, were also not her strong point. Caterpillars, on the other hand, she disliked because they had way too many feet. Thus...

"Well, for today, just discovering where it is is pretty good!" Koyomi decided, pumping her fist and turning around to head home.

There, wearing a school uniform, a teenage boy stood in front of her.

"Discovering where what is?" he said in low voice, sizing her up and glaring at her.

"S, sorry."

"Huh?"

"I mean... please excuse me."

The boy was tall. Compared to Koyomi's height of 146cm, he was definitely taller, probably measuring 180cm. He carried a sports bag at his side, and wore an unchanging bored expression. His looks were not the kind that could be called beautiful, because of his thick eyebrows which almost touched each other.

With the face of someone poking a pillbug that had just rolled into a ball, the boy said, "Why are you apologizing?"

"Ah, yeah, you're right. Hello," Koyomi replied, bowing her head.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Koyomi Morishita. Did you also come here to learn?"

"What would you learn here?"

"Isn't this place a school of wizardry?"

"A school? Here?"

Turning, he muttered something Koyomi couldn't make out because of his low voice, but it was obvious he thought her crazy.

"But, it says here that this is a school where you can learn magic..."

"'Magic'... Now look here," he began, on the verge of tearing his hair out, "How did you come to Ginza?"

"I, I came by train."

"How does the train move?"

"Electricity, I think..."

"Ok, how is electricity produced?"

"Steam power, hydraulic power, nowadays maybe nuclear power,..."

"Exactly."

By now his voice was much louder than before.

"Tch, tch, tch." Bending to look directly into her face, he wagged his finger. "Trains move by electricity. Cars move by burning gasoline; nuclear submarines move by making uranium undergo nuclear fission, and so on. Things like cars that move by chanting spells or submarines that move by the power of magic squares just don't exist. Given that, can you still say that magic is real?"

"Well, but, it says, 'In this modern age of upheaval... Now is a time when magic is useful. Anyone, regardless of age, can learn'..."

"Learn what? If you have free time to memorize this stuff in, you should use it to go home and study. Stupid," he declared.

Koyomi looked back at him with as much indignation as she could muster, though without meeting his gaze.

"I don't think it's stupid at all."

"How do you think that? It's incredibly stupid, and ridiculous to boot."

"How can you say such horrible things as 'stupid' and 'ridiculous' to someone who's talking seriously?"

"So, you're seriously telling me that this world is, right now, riddled with wizards?"

"I'm not saying that."

"Then, I want to see you bend a spoon.[\[2\]](#)"

"Spoons don't have anything to do with this!"

Just when the argument was starting to go nowhere fast, they were interrupted by the gate creaking solemnly open. The noise was, to Koyomi's ears, like the groan of a dark mansion about to devour a human sacrifice after a hundred years of waiting.

Nervously, she turned towards the sound. Beside her, the boy was wearing an expression like half the world's troubles had fallen on him.

One side of the large gate had been pushed open, and standing there was a tall woman wearing only a wrinkled cotton shirt. She didn't seem to care that her thighs protruded from underneath the hem of the shirt. Except for a

pair of black mules[\[3\]](#), she wore nothing from her feet to about the height of Koyomi's stomach.

Apparently, this woman with looks designed to send shivers up any man's spine was the proprietor of the place. A pair of glasses that would not have looked out of place in an antique shop hid her mannequin-like face. In the

middle of her voluptuous chest hung a jet black object reflecting no light, an amulet in the shape of a perfect square, as if it had been drawn with a set square.[\[4\]](#) In the midst of a world full of natural color, only the place where this woman was standing seemed monotone. It was as if when God made her he forgot his colors and drew her in only one color of ink.

With her shoes audibly scuffing the sidewalk, the woman walked towards Koyomi and the boy beside her. Her waist-length black hair swung at each step. Bathed in the light of evening, the waistline of her shirt seemed faintly transparent.

Coming up to beside the fence, the woman said in a somewhat sleepy tone, "Soshiro, for the sake of appearance[\[5\]](#), you might want to take your lovers' quarrel inside."

"It's nothing like that," the boy, now identified as Soshiro, replied.

"To see you finally bringing a friend home, and then come out to hear you breaking up with her... You make your sister so sad."

"This from the person who doesn't get out of bed until nearly sunset?"

"Is it ok to say such things? Your father and mother in heaven will be sad too."

"Don't go killing off Pop yet. Besides, this weird girl is no acquaintance of mine, like you seem to have decided."

"I'm not weird!"

"You two don't have to be so shy about it."

"It's not shyness or anything like that, you've just got the wrong idea."

"I'm not shy!"

"She's here to see you, sis."

"Eh? To see me?"

The woman, who seemed to be Soshiro's older sister, widened her eyes behind her glasses and assumed an unnatural pose peering over the top of her clasped hands.

"This girl?"

Soshiro nodded.

The woman peered into Koyomi's face. Koyomi nervously stared back. The iron fence between them asserted its existence with a piercing squeak, as if trying to say, "You haven't forgotten me, have you?"

"H, hello."

"I don't know where you came from, but my fees are pretty expensive. A low estimate would be about 300 months of an average student's allowance."

"Is that expensive for a tuition fee?"

"Huh? Tuition?"

"Sis, this girl has somehow got the mistaken impression that this is a school or something," Soshiro said in a sarcastic tone, leaning on the ivy-entwined gatepost.

"So, this isn't a school? Er, here, I came because of this..."

The woman took the letter of invitation Koyomi was nervously holding out over the fence. Holding it up to the red evening light, she squinted at it.

In the middle of the paper, a mesh of thin red lines, like blood vessels, became visible.

"This... this code is probably Great-Grandfather's."

""Code'? ...What's that?"

"There are spells woven into this watermark. Amazing; this was probably printed in the Meiji era[\[6\]](#), but even after all this time the paper hasn't aged at all."

Come to think of it, Koyomi remembered that the papers it had been bundled with were all worn out to the point where they might crumble if one touched them.

"I don't really understand, but is this 'code' you mentioned by any chance sort of the source of the magic?"

"In a nutshell, yes, you could say that."

Translation Progress[\[edit\]](#)

50% translated.

Translator: [Thurhame](#)

Translator's Notes[\[edit\]](#)

- [↑](#) Japanese ghosts, called Yurei[\[1\]](#), are generally portrayed without feet.
- [↑](#) Spoon bending is a common symbol of psychic/paranormal abilities.[\[2\]](#)
- [↑](#) Mules are a kind of women's footwear without heels.[\[3\]](#)

- 4. [↑](#) A set square is similar to a straight edge, but used for making right angles.[\[4\]](#)
- 5. [↑](#) In Japan, public displays between couples (of affection or otherwise) are highly discouraged.
- 6. [↑](#) The Meiji era is the period 1868-1912